

# POLICY AND PROCEDURES

NUMBER: 2001

SUBJECT: Inmate Mail

ACA STANDARDS: 4-ALDF-5B-05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 18; 6A-02, 04

DIRECTOR: Herbert Bernsen

EFFECTIVE DATE: 3/1/90 REVISION DATE: 9/97, 10/99, 7/04,  
3/07, 12/12, 12/15, 12/16



## I. POLICY

The St. Louis County Department of Justice Services shall provide the inmates access to the U.S. Postal Service for the purpose of maintaining contact with family, the courts, legal counsel and the community at large.

## II. RESPONSIBILITIES

All St. Louis County Department of Justice Services Mail Clerks, Corrections staff, Internal Affairs Officer and Assistant Director are responsible for the following procedures.

## III. DEFINITIONS

**General Correspondence:** Mail between an inmate and persons not defined under legal correspondence.

**Legal Correspondence:** Mail between an inmate and his/her attorney, judges, officers of the court, officials of the confining authority, administrators of the grievance system, members of the paroling authority or an elected official.

**Indigent Inmate:** An inmate with zero balance on the commissary log for a period of two (2) weeks or more.

**Indigent Mail Allowance:** Facility furnished material for indigent inmates which

consists of: two (2) stamps; two (2) sheets of writing paper; and two (2) envelopes.

#### IV. PROCEDURES

##### A. Incoming Mail

- [1. The Department of Justice Services' Mail Clerk/*designee shall be available for the U.S. Postal Service to drop off incoming and pick up outgoing inmate mail, Monday through Friday, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.*]
2. There will be no restrictions on the volume of correspondence sent or received by inmates. However, inmates may be restricted on the volume of mail retained in their cells.
3. All incoming mail not identified as legal correspondence will be opened and inspected for checks, money orders and contraband.
4. Only money orders, cashier and government checks will be accepted through the mail and credited to an inmate's money account.
5. All money orders and cashier checks should be made payable to the Department of Justice Services. The inmate's name and master number is to be listed either in the memo section of the check or money order and/or at the bottom.

**NOTE:** If the money order or cashier check has the inmate's name on the "Pay to the order of" line then the Mail Clerk will have the inmate endorse the check and send it to the Bonding /Records Clerk.

6. All certified funds (e.g., money orders, cashier and government checks, etc.) will be removed from the envelopes by the Mail Clerk and obtain a signature from the inmate, if required. The Mail Clerk will log the funds on the Mail Log Journal noting the fund amount and form of funds (i.e., money order, check or cash). The Mail Clerk will then deliver the funds and the Mail Log Journal to the Bonding/Records Clerk for posting. The Bonding /Records Clerk will verify the funds against the Mail Log Journal and initial if correct. A Bonding/Records Clerk will return the Mail Log

Journal to the Mail Room when the posting is complete.

7. The Bonding/Records Clerk and or Data Entry Clerk will credit all funds to the appropriate inmate accounts in a timely manner, utilizing the Integrated Jail Management System (IJMS). A receipt will be generated and returned to the mail room for distribution with the inmate's mail.
8. When the Mail Clerk receives Government checks, (e.g., Welfare, Social Security, Supplemental Security Income and Unemployment), the clerk shall inform the appropriate Unit Manager/designee. The Unit Manager/designee will determine if the inmate is entitled to the benefits.
9. If the inmate is entitled to the benefits the Unit Manager/designee will inform the Mail Clerk that the check is approved. The Mail Clerk will have the inmate endorse the check and take it to the Bonding/Records Clerk and/or Data Entry Clerk for crediting to the appropriate account.
10. Any cash, personal checks, or ineligible government checks will be returned to sender.
11. Incoming registered or certified mail shall be processed in the same manner as other mail.
12. Inmates will not be allowed to order merchandise through the mail; C.O.D. mail will not be accepted.
13. All magazines and books sent to an inmate must mailed to the facility directly from the publisher or bookstore.
14. All incoming mail for inmates will be accepted and delivered to inmates excluding:
  - a. Books, magazines and publications that are sexually descriptive in content, show or describe the manufacturing or fabrication of weapons and drugs, promote racial violence, or unlawful behavior.
  - b. Food, clothing, stamps or writing materials.
  - c. Polaroids or photos that display nudity and/or larger than 5 X 7.



C. Inspection of Incoming Mail

1. Legal correspondence will be opened and inspected only in the presence of the inmate to whom it is addressed.
2. All general correspondence will be opened in the Mail Room and inspected for contraband by the Mail Clerks before sorting.
  - a. Unauthorized items listed as contraband, but not of an illegal nature shall be disposed of. However, items of significant value will be stored in the inmate's personal property.
  - b. If large amounts of unauthorized items are received at one time for an inmate, they shall be refused and returned to sender.
  - c. Inmates will be notified in writing when unauthorized items are returned or placed in their property.
  - d. Perishable items contained in the mail shall be placed in the facility garbage.
  - e. Illegal contraband will be handled in accordance with Department policy and an Incident Report generated by the Mail Clerk. (See Policy #840 Preservation of Evidence)
  - f. In the event the Mail Clerk has received information and/or there is an indication that an explosive device has been placed in a letter or package, the Mail Clerk shall immediately notify the Watch Commander. (See Policy #1913 Bomb Threat/Explosion)

D. Indigent Inmates

1. Indigent inmates who wish to correspond with persons in the community may submit a request to their Corrections Case Manager for an indigent mail allowance.
2. The Corrections Case Manager will verify the inmate's indigent status, and an indigent mail allowance will be issued by the Corrections Case Manager, if appropriate.

E. Mail Distribution

1. Inmate mail will be distributed Monday through Friday, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.
2. All mail will be delivered to the inmates within twenty-four (24) hours of its arrival to the Justice Services' Mail Room, unless there is an emergency situation or otherwise disapproved as set forth in this policy.
  - a. The Mail Room Clerk will sort all mail and money order receipts according to the inmate housing units.
  - b. Inmate mail will then be placed into the mail delivery carts and distributed throughout the facility to the various housing units and the Infirmary.
  - c. The Housing Unit Officers will distribute the mail within his/her unit.
  - d. Mail for inmates not present in the housing unit at the time of distribution will be secured at the officer's work station until the inmate returns.
  - e. The Housing Unit Officer will open and inspect legal correspondence for contraband in the presence of the inmate by taking out the contents and thoroughly going through each sheet of paper.
  - f. Mail will be distributed to inmates in a timely manner.

F. Outgoing Mail

1. Inmates will give sealed outgoing mail to the Housing Unit Officer or the Infirmary Officer. The Officer will ensure all mail is taken to Unit Control.
2. Inmates on lockdown status, housed in Disciplinary Segregation and/or bed-ridden will give their sealed mail to the Housing Unit and Infirmary Officers during their tours. The officer will then ensure the mail is taken to Unit Control.
3. Outgoing mail will be collected once a day, Monday through Saturday, excluding Sundays and Holidays, on the 10:30 PM to

6:30 AM shift by an officer assigned to each housing floor.

4. The officer assigned will collect the outgoing mail from the housing unit and deposit it in a 'mail out' box located at Unit Control.
5. The Infirmary Officer will also collect the mail from the inmates and deposit it in a 'mail out' box located at the Nurse's station.
6. Inmates will give inter-office mail to their Corrections Case Manager for routing.
7. The Mail Clerk will pick up the mail from the 'out mail' boxes at each Unit Control and the Infirmary each morning.
- [8. The Mail Clerk will then *give the outgoing mail to the U.S. Postal Service employee and receive the incoming mail from the U.S. Postal Service employee upon his/her arrival, unless otherwise inspected as set forth in this policy.*]
9. If a particular letter is selected for screening or censoring, the Mail Clerk shall deliver said letter, unopened, to the Internal Affairs Officer or in his/her absence to the Superintendent of Security. If after the letter is inspected it is determined that it will not be disapproved, the Internal Affairs Officer or the Superintendent of Security will return it to the Mail Clerk for deposit at the Clayton Branch Post Office or will deposit it at the Post Office personally.
10. All outgoing mail should have the inmate's full name and housing unit assignment in the upper left hand corner of the envelope.
11. All inmates will use the following return address:

**Example:**

Inmate's Name	John Doe
Inmate's Master	Number #12345
Floor/Housing Unit/Cell	4-D-26
<i>[100 S. Central</i>	<i>100 S. Central]</i>
Clayton, MO 63105	Clayton, MO 63105

G. Returned Mail

1. Mail that arrives for released inmates shall be returned to sender.
2. Inmates shall be encouraged by staff to file a change of address form with the local post office after release so their mail will be forwarded.